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Ministry of Forests and Range

PROVINCE UPGRADES FOREST ROADS AS PART OF WAR ON BEETLE

PRINCE GEORGE – As part of the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, the Province is spending $20.7 million to upgrade and maintain forest service roads in the Northern and Southern Interior Forest Regions, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"Forest worker safety is paramount, and these road upgrades will help ensure we can safely accommodate more logging trucks on forest service roads," said Coleman.

As a result of increased logging in mountain pine beetle infested areas, an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 additional logging trucks will travel over forest service roads each year. The funding will be distributed over the next three years to upgrade and maintain forest service roads. The projects will include resurfacing and road widening, upgrading bridges and improving safety at problem intersections.

"Local forest companies are rising to the challenge as we wage a war on the mountain pine beetle," said John Rustad, MLA for Prince George-Omineca. "Our road infrastructure plays an integral part, and this funding will ensure logs are removed out of infested areas safely and efficiently."

"Northern communities rely on our forest industry for jobs, and the success of this industry directly affects our economy," said Pat Bell, MLA for Prince George North. "By acting now, we can minimize any further damage as we pursue new opportunities to capitalize on the use of beetle timber."

"This funding will help us maximize the value of our timber resource for our community while at the same time safeguarding forest workers and the environment," said Shirley Bond, MLA for Prince George-Mount Robson. "This is a welcome investment for the industry and families of the Central Interior."

Maintaining high safety standards to protect forest workers and public safety is a key objective of the provincial Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan. For more information, visit www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle online.

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